

Characters

- Dr` Kheal

Act

*( There is a reading stand, a small table with a jug of water and two glasses, a blackboard, and a stand with various charts, and a pointer. Professor Kheal enters. He is small, or else the furniture is large.)*

DOCTOR KHEAL

The Professor picks up the chalk,

*( Dr` Kheal picks up the chalk)*

and writes.

*( Dr` Kheal writes The Outline on the blackboard. He looks at what he wrote and draws a line along the edges of the blackboard. As he is drawing the line he becomes distracted and the motion of the chalk becomes slower.)*

He looks at the class with an air of superiority and counts to three demanding their attention. One, two and three. He asks his first question.

*( He mouths a question and then puts his hand to his ear as if listening to the answer.)*

Wrong.

*( Pointing in different directions.)*

Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Then, suddenly, someone shouts his answer from the back. Others join him. They all shout at once. It becomes a loud and fast thing. The teacher speaks rapidly, trying to reply to each. Wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong, wrong. Damn it! You're wrong.

*( Suggesting a voice from the distance.)*

"Dear Professor, perhaps you have the wrong answer."

*( He looks at the audience fiercely.)*

My answer wrong? It couldn't be that my answer is wrong. I am the master. Let us proceed.

*( He looks among his papers, then talks to himself.)*

How Could my answer be wrong? ... Hmmm ... Did I have an answer?

*( He thinks.)*

Nonsense, I don't need an answer. I am the master ... Let me see ... Let me see ... I'll find an answer. Hmmm ... Hmmm ... How is that possible? I don't even remember the question. Was there a question?

*( To the audience.)*

Was there?

*( To himself.)*

Hmm. Of course there was. There's always a question, and who knows what the answer is?

*( To the audience.)*

Raise your hand if you know the answer. ... Ha ha. There you are! There are many of you, but the multitude is often wrong.

*( He starts to erase the blackboard.)*

Is it not?

*( He looks to see if someone replies. He erases the blackboard and writes On Poetry.)*

Now, poetry is for the most part a waste of time, and so is politics ... and history ... and philosophy. ... Nothing concrete. Nothing like a well-made box. Which is concrete and beautiful and you can put things in it. But what can you do with poems? Tell me. And with politics, and with history, and with philosophy?--You can wrap them up, shove them up your ass, and what do you have?

*( He moves his hands as if he were doing a magic trick which ends with the middle finger up.)*

... Nothing ... Ha ha ha ha ha ha.

*( Invaded by an immense poetic feeling.)*

But if you can make a box, think, have you not made a lyrical thing?

*( He thinks he hears someone speak. He squints, and looks over his glasses, then ignores the possible speaker.)*

Poetry, on the other hand, is just a few words put together. Just a few. Just words. There is poetry ... And then they say there are poets ... poets of this sort, poets of that sort, and poets of the other sort ... But who, tell me, understands the poetry of space in a box? I do ... Abysmal and concrete at the same time. four walls, a top, and a bottom ... and yet a void. ... Who understands that? I, Professor Kheal, I understand it clearly and expound it well!

*( He takes a deep breath.)*

And then, there is the smell of wood, that sober smell.

*( He goes to the blackboard and writes On Balance. Then, he draws the following figure.)*

*( He moves away, looks at the blackboard, looks for his glasses in his pocket, puts them on, and points to the blackboard.)*

Balance can save your life. Imbalance can destroy it.

*( Lost in his thoughts.)*

... What is balance? ... Balance is a state of equilibrium between opposing forces. The harmonious proportions of elements in design. Balance is keeping my pants up. My groin in place.

*( He looks around with raised eyebrows for a moment.)*

Any more questions?

*( He goes to the blackboard, erases, and writes On Ambition.)*

Then, of course here is the question of will. Will, will, will, will. Always will. Tell me, does anyone here know the answer.

*( He waits for an answer.)*

Does anyone know the nature of will?

*( He waits for an answer.)*

Does the thing happen, or does one do it? ... Through will. Does the thing happen, or does one do it? Of course, sometimes it happens and other times one does it. I don't mean ... just anything ... ordinarily ... I mean how ... what ... which ... Is *it* made? ... Can it be made? ... What? Life! Of course, life. No, I don't mean birth. I mean life. Can I make my own life ... Of course not, you fool. A well-planned life is pitiful. Doesn't it seem richer if the firmament puts its silvery hands in it? In your life?

*( He puts his hand to his ear.)*

What?

( *He listens.* )

Not modern? ... Mo-dern? ...

( *He scrutinizes the speaker.* )

You scum, you turd, you stale refuse. Worse than that! Plastic face!

( *He blows air through his mouth.* )

That is what I think of you. ... I'll take your will and chew on it, like a little oyster, or a clam. Chew, chew, chew, your little will, yum, yum ... Can you make a clam? I'll chew your little entrails.

( *He darts his tongue like a satyr. Then he puts his hands over his groin with a scared look. He looks around the audience.* )

Can you make a clam? I don't mean stuffed clam. I mean--make--a--clam. What would you like? A show of hands? All right. Let's have a show of hands. Those in favor of the firmament leading you by the hand, raise your hands.

( *He counts.* )

Those in favor of making your own life raise your hands.

( *He counts.* )

All I can do is peepee before you.

( *He raises his leg like a dog and then shakes it.* )

And the rest, those who didn't raise your hands--what do you think? Is there another alternative? Either you do it or else it does itself. Life, that is. What other way is there? None.

( *He looks suspiciously at a few.* )

None. There is no other way. All right.

( *He erases the blackboard and writes On Energy. He goes to the chart stand and takes the pointer.* )

Here is the next question.

( *He unrolls a chart that reads: How does one do a million little things?* )

How does one do a million little things? ... What is the answer?

( *Pointing.* )

How--does--one--do--a--million--little--things?

( *He waits a moment for the answer. He speaks with excitement.* )

One at a time!

( *He is pleased with the incisiveness of his answer.* )

Now.

( *He unrolls the next chart. It reads: How does one do a million big things?* )

How--does--one--do--a--million--big--things? ... Hmmm ... Does anyone know the answer?

( *He waits a moment.* )

One at a time. Ha ha ha ha ha ... What a surprise ... Surprised, everyone? Now, the last of three.

( *He unrolls the next chart. It reads: How does one do one big thing?*)

How--does--one--do--one--big--thing? ... Ha ha ha ha ha ha ha. Extraordinary question, isn't it? I'll answer it.

( *He goes to the blackboard and makes this drawing.*)

( *Pointing to where the arrow indicates.*)

Start here.

( *He fills in the space as follows and continues upward with very rapid moves.*)

( *He darts his tongue like a satyr.*)

Would you have guessed? Never.

( *He erases the blackboard and writes On Truth.*)

Now ... words change the nature of things. A thing not named and the same thing named are two different things. Ha ha ha ha ... The ways of the Devil ... that son of a gun ... Someone once said, "In the beginning was the word." Guess who? The Devil ... clever bastard. He'd say anything. In our time he's still renaming things. Freedom! Ah ... You see? I'm right, Happiness! Today who dares to say the word without some kind of

( *mocking their manner*)

"Intellectual hesitation."

( *Still mockingly.*)

"Happiness ... happiness ... What is happiness?"

( *Back to himself.*)

And I show them my teeth.

( *He opens his mouth wide, then puts his fingers in his mouth.*)

And I say to them, there is happiness. My teeth are good.

( *Forcing his hand in the mouth of an imaginary person.*)

And I put my whole hand in their mouths and I call them every name in the book. Violent! I am. I get angry. But it doesn't matter. I am always right. You see, people believe that truth is the order in which they live. Others, the bright ones, believe that there is no truth at all but only an arrangement. Both are mistaken. Ha ha ha ha ha ha. Now, truth is not at all the way we understand things to be. Why? The moment you name it, it is gone. A chair. You name it: "Chair," and there it is, still a chair. A dog. You name it: "Dog," and it comes. But truth ... you name it and it vanishes. What is truth then? Anyone know?

( *He stands like a bullfighter and makes three rapid passes.*)

There is truth. Three quick passes. Name it here, here, and here. Surround it, and you'll have it. Never touch it. It will vanish.

( *He goes to the blackboard and erases. Then he writes Anecdote.*)

On my way here this evening someone said to me. "Dr. Kheal, is being poor a sign of stinginess?"

( *He opens his mouth as if to laugh, but makes no sound.*)

I said, no, it isn't.

( *Pause.*)

But of course it is.

( *Pause.* )

Ha ha ha ha.

( *He erases the blackboard and writes On Beauty and Love.* )

The morning was fine. I cleaned the bathroom, then the kitchen. What else is there but cleanliness?

( *He looks over his glasses expecting objections.* )

And then, I lay down to rest with my head on a high pillow. "Gee, look at my belly going up and down. I must be alive." Well ... in that case ... I go to my dresser, I look in the mirror. "Gee, look how pleasant my face is in the mirror, I must be beautiful." Ha ha ha. Well, we each have our way. I know that we can only do what is possible. I know that. We can only do what is possible for us to do. But still it is good to know what the impossible is.

( *There is a pause. He is looking at the impossible.* )

Beauty is ... the impossible ... Beauty ... beauty ... beauty ... what art thou that drives me out of my mind? Beauty ... Shall I tell you?

( *He sees Crissanda in front of him.* )

She speaks in riddles, like the gods, "ksjdnhyidfgesles." She says:

( *He chants the following in a feminine voice.* )

"I am the supreme lover. I bring you bliss. ... Listen to me ... Listen ... I know ..."

( *In his own voice.* )

The fool, she knows nothing.

( *Lovingly.* )

It's the way she talks, in riddles, like the gods. "ksjdudyehrs." She says:

( *Chanting again.* )

"Don't move your hands when you talk. It tickles me. From the distance, the movements of your hands tickle me."

( *Back to himself.* )

And I laugh. ... And I move my hands. Ha ha ha ha.

( *He pauses. He looks at Crissanda.* )

And she looked at me surprised, and her little eye wanders and is lost.

( *He watches her vanish.* )

"Where are you?" I said, "My little one ... Crissanda ... don't go ... I didn't mean to laugh." And she said: "Crazy people are fools.

( *Making his voice faint.* )

You fool ... you fool ... you fool ..."

( *His eyes are open very wide. They are filled with tears.* )

And she left. "Crissanda, Crissanda," I called after her ... She was gone ... What happened? What happened ... I know what

happened and yet I cannot say. I do not know the words to speak of beauty and love. I, who know everything ... Some things are impossible. ...

( *He goes back to the blackboard.* )

Love, as we know it, increases daily, Let us say the average level of love is 100 degrees. We add a daily increase:of 10. We subtract 7 for daily wear and tear and we have a daily increase of 3 which is cumulative. In 10 days we have an increase of 30 which has raised the level to 130. We have a big fight which reduces the level by 50, leaving love at a low level of 80. However, the daily increase of 10 minus daily wear and tear of 7 continues ... producing a true increase of 3 which is cumulative. After 7 days we have an increase of 3 times 7 which is 21. Added to the low level of 80 we have 101. Back to normal.

( *He has written the following.* )

Here is the arithmetic of love. Ha! You think that is contradictory? Love and mathematics? Don't you know that you can take a yes and a no and push them together, squeeze them together, compress them so they are one? That in fact is what reality is? Opposites, contradictions compressed so that you don't know where one stops and the other begins? ... Let us proceed.

( *He erases, and writes On Hope.* )

And here is a picture of hope.

( *He draws the flloing picture as he describes it.* )

Man stands in his life, "Grotto." Always with a sense of being enclosed. He thinks of freedom, open space, air, sun. The only way out is always narrow, always arduous and frightening to cross. He dares. He fills his lungs with air. He swims. He is courageous. He reaches the point where, if he goes any further, he won't be able to return. "Point of no return." If he continues he might find the exit, if there is an exit ... if the exit is within reach of his endurance That is the point. Does he continue? Does he return? There is the picture of hope.

( *He erases and writes On Cooking.* )

Have you ever cooked brussel sprouts? Miniature cabbage? Toy vegetable? Have you ever seen how beautiful they are?

( *He erases and writes Summing Up.* )

And now, to conclude, I'll sing you a song.

The other day,  
Looking at a weird-looking spider,  
With legs ten times longer than its body,  
Who moved in the most senseless and  
Insane manner,  
I said, "Spider, you are spastic and I am  
A superior beast."

There! That is what it is all about.  
Man is the rational animal

( *He exits.* )

END